

## VINELAND'S STRANGE CASE.

Witness Who Was Shot and Nearly Cremated May Get Well.

NONE OF THE SUSPECTED PERSONS IS ARRESTED AS YET.

A Curious Case in Which Jealousy, Thievery and General Hatred Seem to Enter Largely—The Evidence that a Second Murder Was Contemplated—Confessed—Everybody Wonders if the Mischance Will Be Punished.

(SPECIAL TO THE WORLD.)

VINELAND, April 11.—Thomas Bassett, who was shot and nearly burned to death in his little shack on the Vine road, three miles south of this city, early yesterday morning, is not going to die. The story he tells shows that he is a witness of the alleged poisoning of old James P. Traynor, who was found dead Saturday morning in his home, just across the road from Bassett's burned dwelling, and Bassett claims he had a narrow escape from poisoning himself. He denies that individuals suspected of causing Traynor's death and who, he alleges, shot and attempted to incinerate him, were interested in getting him out of the way, because of the information he could give the authorities.

Bassett has two bullet wounds in his head. One ball entered over his right eye. The other entered just above his left eye. The marks on the ground back of his burned dwelling over an hour, however, and when discovered he was suffering from the exposure. He had nothing on but his night clothes, and is now suffering mainly from exposure to rain and cold. Despite the statements made, not only by Bassett but David King, a deaf mute, and other persons residing in the neighborhood, the county and city authorities are not placed under any arrest. Louis Coppola, the Italian, who with his son and colored boarder, Washington Hawkins, are under suspicion and about whom a strong chain of circumstantial evidence has been woven, were merely summoned to the inquest, and after declaring that they were innocent of anything that might throw light on the double mystery, were permitted to go. No bonds were required for their appearance should they be wanted later on, and they are not even under surveillance. Paris green is said to have been the poison which was used. It is alleged that Traynor, who was eighty years of age, received several bottles of beer from Coppola's Easter Sunday and during the ensuing week. Though Coppola claims to have had no enemy against him, there is evidence to prove that the man known as Traynor, who was a well-known and respected citizen, had been in the habit of visiting the portion of the house which he occupied and that Antonio Coppola, his son, had made turns to assist him, and that he had refused to purchase a horse.

On Easter Sunday Traynor drank some of the beer Coppola had brought and immediately after complained of violent pains in his stomach and a burning sensation. He was sick the following morning, and on the next day he was taken to the hospital. On Wednesday night he took some of Coppola's beer. He, too, became slightly sick and complained of a burning sensation. During Thursday night Traynor became violently ill. He was attended by Dr. R. W. White, of Vineyard, on Friday, and when the doctor left he appeared to be getting better. Saturday morning he was found dead in his chair before his kitchen stove. Several times during the week he told Bassett that Coppola had put something in his beer to make him sick. Bassett believed him, because of his same experience with the beer.

Traynor had ordered Coppola from his house, because he desired to make room for his daughter, Mrs. Annie Route, a widow with several children, whom he had invited to live with him. Coppola had been pretty comfortably quartered with him, and his family consisted of his son, about sixteen years of age, and his twelve-year-old daughter.

They have not been very popular in the neighborhood, because of various petty thefts of eggs, farm produce and poultry which have been traced to them. Traynor had accused them of robbing him of eggs and other articles, and had complained to the neighbors. The little girl stole a gold watch from a family named Leverage, who lived about thirty yards from Bassett's house, but she was prosecuted, as her father returned the thievery.

Coppola had lived in the vicinity for three or four years, and he and his children speak English fluently. In the post-mortem examination of Traynor's body no cause of death could be found. All his organs were found in healthy condition. His stomach was not analyzed, however, but was shipped off to Philadelphia yesterday, where it was examined by Dr. Leffman. The result of Dr. Leffman's work will not be known for a week or so, and until then the authorities do not intend to take any further steps in the matter.

The negro Washington Hawkins, is not suspected of having been in the house, but he has been living with Coppola since the latter moved from Traynor's house, Thursday, and it is believed he knows something of the burning of Bassett's house and the shooting which occurred at the same time. In the ruins of the house was found an old-fashioned revolver containing six chambers and six cartridges. All the cartridges were loaded with buckshot, and probably, in the fire, but two of them showed the marks of the hammer. Bassett says the revolver is his. The bullet extracted from beneath the skin of his scalp was found to be of the same size as the cartridges in his revolver.

This has resulted in starting a theory of suicide, but Bassett declares that the revolver had been left by him on a table near his bed and that it must have been picked up and discharged by his assailants. There are powder marks on his face, showing that the revolver must have been held close to him. He asserts that he retired early and remembering nothing until he found himself lying on the floor in his room and the house filled with fire and smoke.

He struggled to his feet and leaped through a back window, which was barely three feet from the ground, carrying glass and frame with him. The fact that he saved his life by the face and shoulders. He remembers nothing after that, until he regained consciousness in David King's house, a few days later.

The action of King, under whose name Bassett and King lived, in putting up a large sign over the door of the house, showing the location of the road, and the name of the house, and the name of the owner, was a very unusual one, and King's house is about fifty yards to the left. King's housekeeper is Mrs. Danahy, a deaf mute like Bassett.

Mrs. Danahy went up about a clock yesterday morning and saw the light from Bassett's burning house. She at once aroused King, who thought at first that Bassett had perished. He hurried out and soon stood over the man's smoldering body. He carried the man in a wheelbarrow to his own house, and has since cared for him. He carried on a conversation with The World reporter today in writing.

He declared that he knew Coppola and his son had trouble with Traynor over the theft of eggs, and that the former were in the habit of visiting the portion of the house which he occupied and that Antonio Coppola, his son, had made turns to assist him, and that he had refused to purchase a horse. He declared that he knew Coppola and his son had trouble with Traynor over the theft of eggs, and that the former were in the habit of visiting the portion of the house which he occupied and that Antonio Coppola, his son, had made turns to assist him, and that he had refused to purchase a horse.

that Traynor had often complained of the Coppola family, and had told him that the boy threatened to kill him. Dr. White testified that when he left Traynor on Friday the old man appeared to be getting along nicely, and he was startled when he heard of his death Saturday morning. The inquest was adjourned to await the result of the analysis of Traynor's stomach. In the mean time the County Prosecutor, Mr. Logan, may investigate the Bassett case, though yesterday all were supposed to have been suspended. Coppola and his family, with Hawkins, were seen about Bassett's house Sunday. They deny, however, that they left their own house, about two miles from the scene of the fire Sunday night. Coppola claims he and his family retired early, and that they knew nothing of the fire or shooting until late yesterday morning. Bassett and Traynor were much alike in character, though the former was twenty years younger. Each was alone and each was supposed to have money stored away. Traynor is said to have owned property in Brooklyn. In the ruins of Bassett's house two tin boxes containing about \$20 in silver, were found. Everything else was destroyed.

## BROKEN UP BY DIVORCE.

Robert W. White, Jr.'s, Home in Glen Ridge Is Now for Sale.

The broad lawn that lies along Ridge-wood Drive, Glen Ridge, were green and beautiful yesterday, and the various housewives doing their spring cleaning were as happy as the bluebirds that hovered about in the shrubbery. There was one exception, however. Before the house of Mrs. Clara W. White, the prettiest and sunniest on the drive, there hung a sign which read:

"This place for sale." What would the owner mean? Spring is the time when most hearts yearn for grass and pure air. The answer was plain. It takes two birds to enjoy a nest. In this instance one bird had been crowded out by a decree from the divorce court. Robert W. White, Jr., was the unfortunate one. He has been cut loose from his family responsibilities and will henceforth pass as a single, unencumbered man.

The gossip said yesterday that although White proved himself a foolish man. They really thought him a clever, sensible fellow, in the midst of the quarrel of a good home and surrounded by a loving family, he fell in love with a neighbor's daughter. His road to the divorce court was short after that. Today he has not many friends in Glen Ridge.

White was some years ago a well-known young man in Brooklyn. It was there that he met and wooed his now divorced wife. The marriage took place April 20, 1911. Mrs. White had money, and in 1912 they moved to Bloomfield. A year ago they occupied the splendid home in Glen Ridge, now offered for sale.

Old residents say that White got very "sporting" toward the lady. He used to sit up and down the fashionable avenue in a way that caused all the girls to turn their heads and gaze after him. He was regarded as a handsome, however, of a good deal of family connections. His family and the Spencers, who are also aristocratic and live some distance up the drive, were on friendly terms. They went back and forth a good deal, it is said.

Miss Lillian Spencer, a pretty daughter of neighbor Spencer, often called upon Mrs. White, and, innocent as were her intentions, she made Mrs. Bassett's life miserable. White had not passed the period of susceptibility to woman's charms, and he fell in love with Miss Spencer. Nobody knew that he was in love with her. It is believed that she was unaware of the fact herself, for had she known it she would have told her father and there would probably have been sensational consequences.

It is not known how long the flame smoldered in White's bosom. He was very cautious. He acted the part of a friend to Miss Spencer, who, in turn, offered him the use of her car. It is recalled that he took her carriage riding several times. The neighbors thought he was a neighborly fellow, but truth will out. Cruel destiny was all the time lying in wait for White and it tripped him at last.

One afternoon he escorted Miss Spencer to a matinee in New York. Somehow they failed to make the railroad connections with Glen Ridge and were obliged to spend the night at the Hotel Glenham. According to the parlance of "native" yesterday, "they spent the night a settin' on two chairs countin' heads."

When Miss Spencer failed to return that night there was excitement in her father's house. He acted the part of a friend to Miss Spencer, who, in turn, offered him the use of her car. It is recalled that he took her carriage riding several times. The neighbors thought he was a neighborly fellow, but truth will out. Cruel destiny was all the time lying in wait for White and it tripped him at last.

After this escapade White was not so plentiful about Glen Ridge. He became friendly with the family of a Mr. Clark, of New York, and after his wife became divorced proceedings against him were there to live. He admitted that he loved Miss Spencer and made no denial in the divorce action. The court granted the decree to Mrs. White, and he was ordered to pay her \$10,000 for her share of the property. The bill amounted originally to over \$18,000 and the governor cut it down to \$10,000.

Of the forty-nine bills not signed many were pet schemes of the Hudson County politicians. Several of Senator Davis's bills were not signed. The most important of those not signed are:

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GOV. WERTS USES THE KNIFE.

Cuts the Incidental Bill \$4,000—Bills That Are Dead.

TRENTON, April 11.—Gov. Werts filed forty-nine bills passed by the recent Legislature in the State Library today. Without his approval and they will be assigned to the governor's desk.

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175 DOZEN BEST IMPORTED CHEVIOT SHIRTS, LAUNDERED, at 98c. each, ACTUAL VALUE \$2.00.

300 DOZEN IN CHEVIOT, CADRAS AND CREPE CLOTH (UNLAUNDERED), GUARANTEED FAST COLORS, at 45c. each, WORTH \$1.00.

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BROADWAY, 8th and 9th Sts., New York.

23d Street Le Boutillier Bros

THIS LINE WILL BE ON SALE ON SPECIAL TABLE ON FIRST FLOOR, MAIN AISLE.

300 PIECES FRENCH PRINTED SATENS, IN LIGHT AND DARK COLORS, ALSO IN PLAIN BLACK, AND BLACK AND WHITE. IN THIS LOT WILL BE INCLUDED 100 PIECES FINE TAILORETTES IN BLACKS AND COLORS, ABSOLUTELY FAST BLACK AND PERSPIRATION PROOF. ACTUAL VALUE 24c. YARD, SALE PRICE 15c.

GOOD PRICES FOR PAINTINGS.

The first night of the sale of the Knickerbocker pictures at Chickering Hall was well attended. The bidding was erratic—names in many cases being preferred to intrinsic merit. There were many pictures which sold for far less than was expected, among these a couple of admirable Leroles, a Howe, a characteristic Berlioz, a superb Termeuse and a very superior Raffail.

This last mentioned was sold for a song. In compensation there were several pictures, among them a Martin Itin, which were bid up higher